

Minutes
Catawba County Board of Commissioners
Regular Session, Monday, April 4, 2005, 9:30 A.M.

Awards

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Award for Excellence – Fred Miller	810	04/04/05
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Bid Awards

Jail Expansion	812	04/04/05
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Commendations

Maurice Parent – Military Service	809	04/04/05
Telecommunicators	810	04/04/05

Grants

New Schools Project Grant	811	04/04/05
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Hickory Metro Convention Center

Expansion	812	04/04/05
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Jail

Expansion	812	04/04/05
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Newton-Conover Schools

New Schools Project Grant	811	04/04/05
Supplemental Appropriation of Funds	811	04/04/05

Proclamations

Spring Litter Sweep	809	04/04/05
Week of the Young Child	809	04/04/05
Child Abuse Prevention Month	810	04/04/05
National Public Safety Telecommunication Week	810	04/04/05

Resolution

Funding for Renovation of Arts & Science Center	810	0404/05
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The Catawba County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, April 4, 2005, 9:30 a.m. at the 1924 Courthouse, Robert E. Hibbitts Meeting Room, 30 North College Avenue, Newton, North Carolina.

Present were Chair Katherine W. Barnes, Vice-Chairman Dan A. Hunsucker, Commissioners Glenn E. Barger and Barbara G. Beatty.

Absent: Commissioner Lynn M. Lail.

A quorum was present.

Also present were County Manager J. Thomas Lundy, Assistant County Manager Joellen J. Daley, Assistant County Manager Lee Worsley, County Attorney Robert Oren Eades, Attorney Debra Bechtel, and County Clerk Barbara E. Morris.

1. Chair Barnes called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m.
2. Chair Barnes led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
3. The Invocation was offered by Commissioner Barbara Beatty.
4. Commissioner Barger made a motion to approve the minutes from the Environmental Retreat of March 21, 2005 and the Regular Meeting of March 21, 2005. The motion carried unanimously. At this time Chair Barnes noted that Commissioner Lail was out of town and unable to attend the present meeting.
5. Recognition of Special Guests.
Chair Barnes recognized Sheriff Huffman and Dr. Crawford from the Newton-Conover Schools. She also welcomed all the people in attendance and said it was rewarding when a good number of attendees were present at the Board meetings.
6. Public comment for items not on the agenda. None.
7. Presentations.
Chair Barnes presented a Certificate of Commendation to County Park Ranger Maurice Parent in recognition of his honorable military service in Iraq with the 156th Military Police Detachment of the West Virginia Army National Guard. Chair Barnes said the Board really appreciated what Mr. Parent had done for our nation. Jacky Eubanks, Planning Director, said he was glad to have Maurice back home safe and well and noted it is not easy to make the adjustment back to civilian life but Mr. Parent had done an outstanding job in making the transition and is a great example to those returning from serving our country. Mr. Eubanks said the County was proud to have Maurice as a park ranger. Mr. Parent then thanked everyone involved and Blair Rayfield, Parks Manager, for welcoming him back and helping him adjust to everyday normal life.

Henry Hilton and Tony Gallegos from Cooperative Extension accepted the Spring Litter Sweep Proclamation declaring April 16-30 as Spring Litter Sweeps Week from Vice-Chair Dan Hunsucker. Vice-Chair Hunsucker said it was a pleasure to recognize the groups who try to help keep our county looking clean. Tony Gallegos said it was a pleasure working with the Cooperative Extension in this effort and provided the Commissioners with a copy of the Wastewatcher Newsletter and an annual report which highlighted the accomplishments of the task force for the last year. Henry Hilton, chairperson of the task force, said they had challenged each of the municipalities to roll up their sleeves and get involved in Litter Sweep and encouraged citizens to join in this effort.

Kim Lyke Salyards from the Catawba County Partnership for Children and several young children accepted the Week of the Young Child Proclamation from Chair Barnes. Ms. Salyard reminded everyone that the 10th Annual Family Fair was taking place at CVCC where families could enjoy fun and free activities for the day and be informed of all the difference services available to children and families in Catawba County.

Commissioner Glenn Barger then presented Cyndy Benson, Social Work Program Manager, with the

Child Abuse Prevention Month Proclamation. Ms. Benson thanked the Commissioners and all the citizens of Catawba County for their continued support in the effort to fight child abuse and neglect in the County. She said the Child Advocacy Center was having an open house on April 8th to kick off the Blue Ribbon campaign and invited all to that event.

Chair Barnes took a moment to recognize Fred Miller, Director of the Cooperative Extension Service, who was present at the meeting and noted that Mr. Miller was one of the six recipients of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Award for Excellence with North Carolina State University. Chair Barnes said the Board was honored by this honor he had received.

Commissioner Barbara Beatty then presented Jerry Boggs, Telecommunications Administrator, with the National Public Safety Telecommunications Week proclamation. Commissioner Beatty asked all the telecommunications present to come forward and joked about who was left manning the comm Center and recognized Mark Wireman for his recent healthy weight loss. Commissioner Beatty noted that the telecommunications make things a lot easier for the citizens of Catawba County and their efforts were appreciated. Jerry Boggs thanked the Commissioners for the recognition and said he was proud of their restructuring and the ability to dispatch assistance within 20-40 seconds. Commissioner Beatty then presented individual commendations to Mark Wireman, Tammy Saunders, Larry Marlow, Alena Greer, Tim Hayes, Jeffrey Kanupp, Marty Huffman, Casey Ammons, Cynthia Hodge, Chad Pate and Brian Drum. Jerry Boggs then reminded everyone present about the national recognition that Larry Marlow received for helping a 4 year old child at 1:30 a.m. when he could not find his parents. Mr. Marlow talked to the child for over an hour before the parents could be located. Chair Barnes then asked Mr. Boggs to comment on how people are identified when they call 911. Jerry said that wireless was a big struggle at first and in Catawba County they are faced with GPS cellphones that can be tracked but the throw-away type cellphones cannot be traced just as voice-over IP (voice over the internet) are difficult to trace. Because of this, the telecommunicator needs to determine where they are and the restructuring now requires three questions to be asked immediately: Where are you, give me your phone number and what is the problem.

Chair Barnes stated there was an addition to the agenda which was a resolution for the Board's approval that supported legislation which encouraged the North Carolina Legislature to partner with the SALT (Science, Art, Literature Together) Block to fund \$225,000 toward the \$2.8 million renovation to the Arts and Science Center of Catawba Valley. Chair Barnes asked Cathy Greathouse to clarify what was being asked for. Ms. Greathouse said that a grant for \$225,000 was being requested that would be matched with \$75,000 by the SALT Block Foundation and the Catawba Science Center. The resulting \$300,000 will go half toward the renovations of the auditorium and half toward the renovation of the Catawba Science Center shop building. The renovations for the auditorium are due to constant usage which is considered a good thing. Ms. Greathouse said if they do not ask for the money they will not get it and if the Board does not support the asking for the money, the bill will not pass.

The resolution read as follows:

**Resolution No: 2005 -
RESOLUTION OF THE CATAWBA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REQUESTING THAT THE
N. C. LEGISLATURE FUND \$225,000 TOWARDS A \$2.8 MILLION RENOVATION TO THE ARTS AND
SCIENCE CENTER OF CATAWBA VALLEY**

WHEREAS, the Arts and Science Center of Catawba Valley is a \$2.8 million renovation of the old Hickory High School which houses the Catawba Science Center, the Hickory Museum of Art, the Western Piedmont Symphony, the Hickory Choral Society, the offices of the Catawba County Council for the Arts, and a multi-functional 490-seat auditorium; and

WHEREAS, Catawba County supports the Arts and Science Center with numerous partnerships and in-kind contributions and has provided annual financial support to the Arts Council since FY 1984/85 totaling \$3,060,701; and

WHEREAS, the Arts and Science Center is a part of the SALT (Sciences, Art, Literature Together) Block, and was joined by the City of Hickory's Patrick Beaver Public Library in 1998; and

WHEREAS, the auditorium is used 250 days a year mainly for student performances, but other users include The Degas String Quartet, quartet-in-residence with the Western Piedmont Symphony and the Hickory Community Theatre; and

WHEREAS, this once beautiful and graceful setting is now desperately in need of rejuvenation because seats are worn and broken; sound and lighting systems are antiquated; the stage lacks a curtain, the entire auditorium needs painting, and the floors need to be refinished; and

WHEREAS, The Catawba Science Center has been serving Hickory and the Catawba County area as a premier educational resource since 1975 and the Science Center proposes a renovation which will transform the 1950's-era facility into an innovative facility that will complement and enhance the SALT Block by providing exciting new exhibits and educational resources that include: a 6,500-gallon saltwater touch tank, a 5,000-gallon glass-fronted Lake Hickory/Catawba River tank, a 60-seat multi-use theater/digital planetarium and a hands-on physical science exhibit area; and

WHEREAS, the expanded Science Center will offer important new educational services to school children (20,000 students and teachers per year will visit the new exhibits with ancillary programs tied to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study), and the new facility will support increased live animal programming away from the facility; and these outreach programs will serve 50,000 people a year in 11 counties; and

WHEREAS, The SALT Block Board of Directors requests \$225,000 from the North Carolina General Assembly for renovation of the auditorium in the Arts and Science Center of Catawba Valley and renovation of the former "upper building" of the old Hickory High School for expansion by the Catawba Science Center.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Catawba County Board of Commissioners, sitting in open session this 4th day of April, 2005, at a regularly scheduled meeting of the governing body of said Board, duly called and posted in accordance with the statutes of the State of North Carolina, that the Board does hereby express its approval and support of legislation that encourages the North Carolina Legislature to partner with the SALT Block to fund \$225,000 towards the \$2.8 million renovation to the Arts and Science Center of Catawba Valley.

Done this 4th day of April, 2005.

Chair Barnes then asked for a motion to adopt the resolution. Commissioner Barger made the motion to adopt the resolution and the motion carried unanimously.

8. Appointments: None.

9. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Budget:

Dr. William Crawford, Superintendent for Newton-Conover City Schools and Judy Ikerd, Budget Manager, presented a request for appropriation of funds for Newton-Conover City Schools. Dr. Crawford thanked the Commissioners for considering the request and apologized for his absence at the last meeting due to illness.

The Newton-Conover Schools have applied for a New Schools Project Grant for the redesign of North Carolina high schools. The school now needs space to implement the program. They have identified the brick mason shop as a building of 4000 square feet and which is an appropriate space for the program but it needs to be renovated with the appropriate lighting, heating and cooling and fixtures to turn it into a classroom area. Judy Ikerd indicated this request was for a supplemental appropriation to complete the project and the approval of \$120,000 from schools capital project fund balance was needed. Chair Barnes asked Dr. Crawford how many students would be impacted by this program and he said they expected approximately 48 students to be enrolled in the program in the Fall of 2005. Chair Barnes said this was a wonderful project and a real value to the students in Catawba County. Commissioner Barger said he was excited about this recreation of secondary education and wished the Newton-Conover School well in this project.

Supplemental Appropriation:

Increase 420-750100-690100
Increase 420-750100-864200-33102-3-16

Fund Balance Applied \$120,000
NCHS Masonry Bldg \$120,000

Vice Chair Hunsucker made a motion to approve the supplemental appropriation of \$120,000. The motion carried unanimously.

Finance:

Rodney Miller, Finance Director, presented a request for the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$43,135 to be paid to the City of Hickory for the expansion of the Hickory Metro Convention Center. In May 2004 the Board met with Hickory City Council and the Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority and agreed upon a 38,000 square foot expansion to the Convention Center. The expansion will co-locate the Catawba County Economic Development Corporation and the Visitors Bureau and increase the exhibit space. The City of Hickory was able to finance the debt at 2.67% interest rate which reduced the County's share to them from \$49,742 in fiscal year 2004-05 to \$43,135 and reduced the \$1.2 million the County would pay over the life of the loan to \$1.1 million. In 2005-06 the County will begin recouping revenue from the Center's revenues and by 2011, there will be positive cashflow and in 2017 the County will completely recoup their investment. The Board set aside \$350,000 in 2003-04 for future economic development projects and Mr. Miller recommended to tap those funds for this first debt payment in the amount of \$43,135.

Supplemental Appropriation:

City of Hickory (TDA Debt)	110-190050-861004	\$43,135
Transfer fm Capital Reserve	110-420050-695225	\$43,135
Transfer to General Fund	225-170020-995110	\$43,135
Fund Balance Appropriated	225-170020-690100	\$43,135

Vice-Chair Hunsucker made a motion to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$43,135 . The motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Barger asked about getting reports regarding the investment return and how this expansion has increased the conventions and the number of hotel nights, etc. He said he just wanted to remind those involved that the Commissioners would like to see such a report. Mr. Miller said they had worked on a business plan with Mr. Rosenblatt at the Convention Center and Mr. Miller had requested a monthly report of their revenues and he will monitor those. The Center has another agreement with Hickory to pay the debt on the building and the revenues have to pay that debt first and this is a second debt between Hickory and the County and the County will get second monies after that first debt payment is made. Therefore the County is very interested in the revenues increases based on this expansion. County Manager Tom Lundy said the County would also be monitoring the Convention Visitor Bureau because that is really where the activity takes place to get the people in for the conventions.

Bid Award:

John Hardy, Project Manager , Jail Expansion Team presented the bid award information. Mr. Hardy said he was there on behalf of the Jail Expansion Team and identified those present at the meeting: Sheriff David Huffman, Major Cory Reid, Captain Tom Lambert, Lt. Mike Hale, Rodney Miller, Debbie Anderson, Ernest Williams, Kim Watson and Toni Gortney. He said the project had been a team effort and each of the team members had contributed an enormous amount.

Mr. Hardy explained the bids had been received on the project and recommended the bid award be given to Hickory Construction in the amount of \$13,830,500 – with the latest cost estimate being \$14,500,000.

The current jail was first occupied in 1980 with 89 beds and 27,000 sq. feet and the current inmate average is 155-160 per day. The current expansion will increase beds to 259.

Bid were sought on February 8, 2005 with pre-qualification of ten construction companies. Bids were received on March 22, 2005 from three companies: DeVere Construction, LeChase Construction and Hickory Construction. Water supply and power generation issues were resolved with arrangements with the City of Newton. The remaining issue, the existing fire alarm system in the existing jail, was addressed in Alternate #1 of the bids. The lowest bid was Hickory Construction Company at \$13,750,000 and \$80,500 for Alternate #1. The County's original estimate for this project was \$14,568,494.

Mr. Hardy reminded those present that this project is just not the construction of the building but encompasses moving sheds, moving water lines and other major redos.

Vice-Chair Hunsucker said he appreciated all the work and dedication that has been put into this project and feels the attention to detail is going to pay in the long run.

Vice Chair Hunsucker made a motion to award this bid of \$13,830,500 to Hickory Construction Company. The motion carried unanimously.

County Manager Tom Lundy said that Mr. Hardy had done a good job in identifying the members of the team and their specific contributions but Mr. Lundy wanted to note John Hardy's contribution to the project. He said John has a lot of talent and a real gift for working with facilities and when County Manager Lundy called him two years ago about taking on the role of project manager John was battling mental health issues on the state level and he never hesitated to take on this task and his willingness to head this project was appreciated

10. Attorneys' Report – None.
11. Manager's Report – None.
12. Other Business – None.

Commissioner Barger moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:22 a.m.

Katherine W. Barnes, Chair
Board of Commissioners

Barbara E. Morris, County Clerk